

THE BEACON

FOR SCHOOL AND HOME

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By A. E. Swoyer.

NEST OF THE MISSEL THRUSH.

A Bird Song.

SEE me swinging,
Hear me singing,
In my tree.
I've a secret,
Can you keep it?
Promise me.

I've the neatest
And completest
Little home,
Built so high up
In the tree-top,
None can come.

And inside it
(I can't hide it)
Is my mate.
Why's she staying,
Why not flying?
Only wait.

Five blue eggs there
Need so much care,
She must stay,
And be faithful
To the nestful,
Night and day.

In the summer,
Maybe sooner,
Birdies wee
Will be trying
Wings in flying
From this tree.

That's my secret;
Now you have it,
Guard it well.
It would kill us
If you fail us,
If you tell.

S. C. PEABODY.

The Stake-Driver.

BY EUNICE MCKINSTRY.

I WAS spending Easter week with friends in the country. Early on a mild evening, when everything was calling one out of doors, Callie, the fourteen-year-old boy of the family, suggested that we go "thunder-pumping." So off we started for the sloughy bayou that cuts through one corner of the farm. At his advice I had donned his mother's rubber boots and a short full skirt and warm mackinaw, and was prepared for walking, wading, climbing, or sitting still, at need.

I was delighted with the prospect of seeing and hearing the "booming bittern," that general favorite with poets.

"Do they stay all the year round?" I asked as we strode along.

"They've just got here for the spring," said Callie. "I've heard a mire-drum for two nights now, and last evening I spotted one of them down here a short ways. It's such a comical sight to see them boom that I thought you'd want to see it, too."

"Yes, I do; but I know just how it's done, for I've read, in several old poems, that the bittern sticks its beak deep into mud while booming, to get the roar, and"—

"Then the poets don't know a thing about it," scoffed Callie; "for that is per-
fectly the way they don't do it. If you want to get facts about birds, don't consult poets. Here we are."

He indicated a large tree that had been uprooted and lay almost horizontally from the bank out over a marshy, boggy bit of the bayou. We seated ourselves comfortably up among the branches, and prepared to enjoy the thunderer's serenade.

The first sound we heard was the shrill, cricket-like chirp of young frogs in the reeds, almost ear-splitting in pitch.

"Good place for thunder-pumps," whispered Callie. "They live on peepers."

Suddenly he nudged me and pointed: "There's one."

I followed his finger, but saw nothing.

"Maybe you think it's a stake. There, close to that cattail."

Finally I discovered what looked like a wooden stake rising a little above the reeds. But there was a bright yellow eye not far below a shining black beak, and above a long, stick-like neck of yellowish brown feathers. For some minutes I watched the bird, motionless except when he ducked his head snakily and brought up a wriggling frog, which he would sometimes gulp down without ceremony, and sometimes playfully flirt in the air and catch on the drop.

It was graying into dusk, and we were afraid we were going to miss the musical part of the banquet. But the bittern evidently was not afraid of injuring his concert by singing on a full stomach, and dined heartily.

Then our waiting was rewarded, as his had been. The bumper came out of the reeds and posed himself on a log, which gave him the cloud-gray water for a background, and

threw him into bold relief. Soon he began to sing, or, rather, to disgorge himself of notes.

Standing perfectly erect and entirely motionless, with his bill pointing exactly toward the zenith, his head began very slowly to sink, down, down, down, while his body as slowly assumed a horizontal position. Soon the neck was in the shape of a horizontal S. Then the bird's head suddenly shot forward and a little downward, until the neck was almost straight again and in a line with his tail, and out came a very labored "Chunk-a-lunk." Perhaps it would not have sounded so labored had we not seen the pains he was put to in order to produce it. Or that may have been a preliminary tuning up, or clearing his throat.

After coughing out the three syllables, he dropped his tail and raised his head, until he seemed to be gathering notes from the air above him, almost standing tiptoe to reach them. Then, having filled his throat full of tones, he lowered his head slowly, writhed his neck into an overturned S, shot his beak forward, and pumped out a quick series of "Chunk-a-lunk! Chunk-a-lunk! Chunk-a-lunk!"

"If we were off a ways, we would hear just the 'Chunk,'" commented Callie, "and then it sounds much like driving a stake."

The whole performance was repeated again and again, and rapidly, too, considering how much effort it was for him to collect and distribute his notes. Had he been trying to commit suicide by strangling himself, the bitten would have gone through just such contortions.

But the mate he was trying to attract was evidently charmed by it all, for after several minutes of this booming, she came slipping through the grasses, stood in silent admiration until he had finished, and then went away with him.

Sam Whitey's Lesson.

BY WALTER K. PUTNEY.

BIG BROTHER GREAT CLIFF, Sister Seaweed, and the East Wind got to talking it all over one day, and they agreed that the next time Sam Whitey, the sanderling, should come down to the beach they would teach him not to be so careless about the way in which he chased after little bits of food that the waves brought in every time they raced up on to the beach.

"I tell you what we'll do," said the East Wind as she tossed her head, "we'll all work together and give Sam Whitey a good ducking."

"That is easy enough to say," replied Sister Seaweed; "but just how are we to do it? That is more to the point."

"Yes, and it is easy enough to do, too," was East Wind's answer, "if you folks will only do your share, just as I ask."

Big Brother Great Cliff was a little disturbed. He rather liked Sam Whitey and did not wish to have him actually harmed, although he had to admit that Sam was getting very careless about the way in which he did chase after those little bits of food that the waves brought in as they raced up on to the beach. So Big Brother Great Cliff just sat and thought and thought and thought; finally he said slowly:

"Remember, East Wind, that we must not do anything that will cause Mrs. Whitey or the little Whiteys any sorrow. If we are

to frighten Sam, we must do so without actually hurting him. Remember, now!"

"O Big Brother Great Cliff," explained East Wind, blowing up and making the trees on Big Brother Great Cliff's forehead wave and wave until it seemed as if a storm must be coming, "we won't hurt him badly; in fact, we must hurt his pride some or else it will not do any good at all."

"Oh, well!" and Big Brother laughed until the trees on his forehead shook even more, "I guess it won't hurt him any to touch his pride a bit, so go ahead and tell us all about your plan."

"It is just like this," East Wind spoke very thoughtfully, "Sam Whitey has been bragging that he can beat the waves every time they try to race with him, and they declare that some day they will bring all the big waves from the ocean and tear down the beach so that Sam Whitey can never feed there any more. And I should not be a bit surprised if they did so, for I heard the message they sent by the South Wind and it was not a bit good news, I can assure you. Now I think that I can persuade the Little Waves to help us a lot, and if we are successful we can give Sam Whitey such a lesson that he will not boast again as long as he lives."

"What can I do to help out?" asked Sister Seaweed. "I should not like to see the nice beach all torn up by those big ocean waves just because of a beach bird's boasting."

"Well," answered East Wind, "you must spread yourself out just as much as you can both on the rock and on the sand which runs up toward where Sam Whitey likes to catch his dinner. I'll have the Little Waves bring in something especially good to eat and carry it near where you will be resting. Big Brother Great Cliff, just as Sam Whitey chases into the edge of the waves, you must throw down a stone that will go splash! right into the water near him. Then, you see, Sam Whitey will think that something is after him and he will jump; and Sister Seaweed will make his feet slip right from under him, and the Little Waves, blown on rapidly by me, will give Sam Whitey the worst ducking he ever got in his life!"

And so the next time Sam Whitey came down to the beach to get his dinner, the Little Waves brought in something especially nice—or at least it looked so to Sam Whitey, and he watched it come nearer and nearer and he clicked his bill with joy at the thought of what a nice dinner he was about to have; he was so intent upon watching it, however, that he did not notice that the Little Waves were taking it right over to where Sister Seaweed was basking in the sun; nor did he notice that East Wind was creeping softly up behind the Little Waves. And do you know! just as Sam Whitey ran forward into the very edge of the water, splash! went a stone right in the water beside him, and it startled him so that he jumped right on to Sister Seaweed's dress that lay in the water. And then what do you think! The Little Waves, pushed along faster and faster by East Wind, ran right up on to Sam Whitey, and before he could scramble down from Sister Seaweed's wet and slippery dress he was drenched all over with spray and foam!

Such a looking bird as Sam Whitey was after the Little Waves had run out again to sea! Every feather in his spotted back was soaking wet; his white breast was gray with the salt from the sea water, and as he shook himself, poor Sam Whitey heard the Little Waves calling as they raced along,—

"Sam Whitey got beaten; Sam Whitey got beaten!"

And from that day poor Sam Whitey, his pride very, very much hurt, never again boasted that he could beat the Little Waves as they raced with him along the beach. Sam Whitey had certainly learned his lesson!

The riches of the Commonwealth
Are free, strong minds and hearts of health;
And more to her than gold or gain
The cunning hand and cultured brain.

WHITTIER.

The Bird Hunt.

BY ELIZABETH GALE.

HELLO, Tom!" called Will. "How would you like to go bird hunting with me?"

"Bird hunting!" cried Tom, "Why, I thought you wouldn't shoot birds, Will. And besides, you have no gun."

Will laughed. "We don't need a gun for this kind of hunting," he said, "and we won't hurt anything either. Come, let us try the river first."

The two boys went down to the river and got into Will's canoe. The water was very still and smooth this morning and so clear that they could see the fish swimming near the bottom, and often as they came along turtles would crawl off the logs and stumps along the banks and go into the water with a SPLASH!

Tom was so busy watching things that he was surprised when Will said, "Listen!"

From around a bend in the river they could hear a bird singing, "*Onk-o-lee! Ka-lonk-o-lee!*"

"It is a red-winged blackbird," said Will. "Just what I am looking for! Be very quiet."

They paddled around the bend as quietly as they could and there, on a tall, nodding reed, they saw the red-wing.

"He has a nest down there in the bushes," whispered Will, and then he picked up his camera, for that is what he was hunting with.

"*Onk-o-lee! Wa-lonk-o-lee!*" sang the blackbird and dipped and swayed and spread his wings to keep his balance.

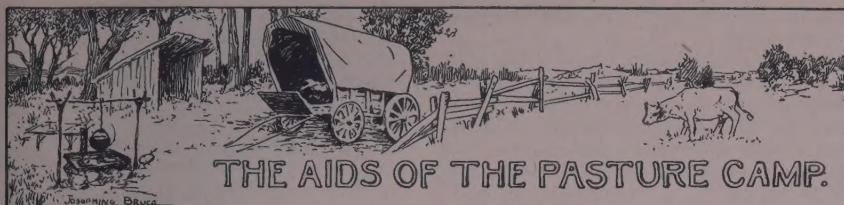
Softly the canoe slid up to the bank; click-click went the camera and with a startled flutter off flew Mr. Red-wing.

"But I got a good picture of him, I am sure," cried Will. "We were right close up to him."

That was the best picture they took that morning, but it was not the only bird they hunted by any means. They had a long, exciting chase after an oriole and then missed him after all, and they took a fair picture of a woodpecker and another of a robin.

"I like this sort of hunting," said Tom as they were coming home. "It is terribly exciting, and then when it is all over, you have done something worth while. If we keep on hunting, Will, we will soon have a very interesting and quite a valuable collection of pictures."

"Yes," said Will, "the pictures will be much more valuable than the birds themselves if we had shot them. And there is another reason why I like this way of hunting best. I think it is much more sportsman-like because it requires more skill. It is much harder to get a good picture of a bird than it is to shoot one."



THE AIDS OF THE PASTURE CAMP.

BY MABEL S. MERRILL.

In Four Chapters. Chapter I.

THE two Graham girls, Pen and Una, looked at each other and then at their brother Ned. Sometimes they managed to remember that Ned was the oldest and waited for him to speak. But this time the boy only looked out of the window and whistled a tune which probably nobody had ever heard before.

It was little Mother Graham who spoke at last: "You know, children," she said gently, "I haven't any money to give you a nice vacation. All the summer places cost too much, and of course we can't ask your grandfather to go to any expense just for pleasure. He has taken us all in and given us a home, and that takes money, you know, even if he does live on a farm."

There was silence for a moment. The children had wished very much to join a party of neighbors and schoolmates who were going to spend their vacation at Ocean Point, a summer resort not far off. They could not help being disappointed. But nobody spoke till Bun, the eight-year-old brother, said:

"I wouldn't cost much to go and camp out in the pasture with Dr. Max." The Graham children always called their half-brother Dr. Max. He was a good deal older than they were, and had been away at school so much that he was almost a stranger to the younger ones.

"Max doesn't want you a bit," returned Mother Graham, promptly, "and no wonder! Land, how would he ever get those magazine articles written and find all the birds he wants to take pictures of if he had a pack of noisy children on his hands!"

"There's eighty acres in the pasture," suggested Ned, his eyes beginning to sparkle at the idea Bun's small mind had seized upon. "We could camp by ourselves in a different place, and Max wouldn't see us at all unless he wanted to."

"What would you do for a tent?" Mother Graham began to consider the question as the children came crowding around her. "It costs money either to hire or buy one."

"Build a shack! The fellows did at Crystal Mountain," cried Ned, who had learned something of woods life from the older boys.

"And come home every time it rained or you got hungry," laughed Mother Graham.

"No, ma'am! if we go to live in the pasture, we stay and live there. No begging for a biscuit at the back door or sneaking in to sleep in a bedroom when it rains!"

"Won't it be just as well if you stay at home and play in the pasture all day?" asked Mother Graham. "I'm sure you're out there half the time as it is."

"Oh, Mother, don't you see?" cried Pen. "Tisn't adventures to just go and play in the pasture and come home at night like common folks. I'd like to go and build a shack and get my living out there like an Indian."

They heard Grandfather Reed laugh behind his paper, and then he put it down to look at the four children.

"Let 'em go, Anna," he advised his daughter. "Twon't hurt 'em a mite. What could happen to them out there in the old pasture with Max so near? Tell you what I'll do, Ned, if your mother is willing you should go. I'll lend you the Contrary Cow for all summer. Hunt her up and milk her every night and morning, and you can have the milk towards your food supply."

"All right!—Say, that's great, Gramp." Ned knew his grandfather was laughing at him, but the offer was a good one for all that.

The Contrary Cow was the most provoking creature on the farm, and the boy particularly disliked the job of hunting her up at night. She would never come with the other cows, and had a way of hiding herself in all sorts of unlikely places, especially the swamp.

"If I'm going to be out in the pasture all night, anyway, I shan't mind hunting up that cow half so much," declared Ned, and Grandfather Reed laughed and said the boy had the best of the argument.

It came into Mother Graham's head as she thought over the new plan that if the children were off her hands for the summer she could take a few boarders from the city, and so earn a little towards helping her father with a payment on the farm, which was coming due in the fall.

"But you'd have to have some supplies," she said doubtfully. "I'm afraid it would cost more to provide for you out there than it would here at home. You see, you don't know how to get meals and manage things."

Una put in a quiet word as her mother paused. "We never had anything to manage, mamma; we've always had things done for us. Maybe we could do better than you think. Anyway, we should have a chance to learn."

"I'll tell you what let's do," cried Ned. "We'll take what money we've got among us,—we four,—and spend just that for supplies to begin on. When they're used up, it will be time enough to think what to do next. Of course, we can let you know if we're starving."

But he was making up his mind, even as he spoke, that he would not ask for a bit of help toward their living in the pasture. Ned was thirteen; he could find work to do for the farmers while the girls and Bun picked berries.

"Well, you may try it if you'll agree not to bother Dr. Max," said Mrs. Graham at last. "Remember he wants to get those bird articles and pictures just as good as he can, in hopes that the *Bird Lovers' Magazine* will pay him a good price to go on that autumn trip to Florida to write about Southern birds."

"We won't go near him! Max is no fun," declared blunt-spoken Pen. "He always has his head in a note-book or under a camera cloth. I shan't take any more notice of him than he does of us, and that's precious little."

Grandfather and Ned had a conference in the barn about what the campers ought to take. It was so late in the season that the cellar was pretty well emptied of vegetables, but grandfather would have insisted on giving them more than he could well spare if Ned would have taken them. The heap of supplies which they had bought with their small stock of money did not look very large. What Ned seemed most anxious to take, however, was an old cart almost too rickety to be used in farm work.

"You won't miss it if we keep it all summer," he said. "If you'll lend us old Maggie to haul it out to where we want it in the pasture, she'll know enough to come home by herself."

What Ned put in that cart besides their heap of supplies was a secret from the girls for the present. Mother Graham had picked out some old thick quilts and some blankets which, though ragged at the edges, were warm and cosy for cool or rainy nights. Una and Pen, who had been out a few times with the Campfire Girls, older than they, selected the dishes,—not too many of them, and all old ones which were not used at home.

The dew was just dry next morning when the cart load of goods and children went winding around the pasture hill along an old wood road.

It was the end of the first week in June, and they had the summer before them.

"I'm glad now we couldn't go to Ocean Point," cried Pen. "I believe we can have just as much fun right here in Gramp's pasture."

"Isn't it lovely to think we can stop just where we like? Oh, Ned, here's the prettiest place of all." Una pointed to a spot at the top of a high bank near the entrance to a handsome grove of pines.

"This is the place I was thinking of all the time," agreed Ned, and old Maggie stopped of her own accord as if to admire the view.

They had left the hill behind them, and were out on a level plain covered with clumps of pine and patches of blueberry bushes. Not a house was in sight, and the town road, which ran along the outer edge of the pasture, was hidden by trees. Some distance away behind a low pine thicket they could see the white top of the tent where Dr. Max was spending his summer in writing and bird study.

Max Graham, by the way, was not a doctor. They called him that because as a boy he had had a gift for treating wounds and patching up the broken bones of any bird or animal which had met with an accident. Max's mother had died when the boy was fourteen; he had been sixteen and away at school when his father's second marriage took place, and he had never lived at home since his half brothers and sisters could remember. After Father Graham's death Max's visits to his stepmother and the children were fewer than ever. This spring, when Mrs. Graham had taken them all home to her father's to stay, the older brother had come down to see what sort of a place they were living in, and had taken such a fancy to the old farm, and especially the pasture, that he had begged leave of Grandfather Reed to camp out there during the summer.

"We like Max, but it always seems just as if he were company," Una would say, and Pen would add: "He doesn't care so much about us as he would if we were robins or blue jays," which was only Pen's jealousy at not being taken more notice of by the bird expert. But it was true that Dr. Max had

hardly seen enough of his young brothers and sisters to get really interested in them.

"Don't Bother Max"—we must nail that up to a tree somewhere to remind us," observed Ned, gravely. "Come, girls, we've got home. Look alive now, and help set up housekeeping!"

(To be continued.)

The Choristers.

BY ARTHUR W. PEACH.

THIS morning, in my window,
When shadows of the night
Were fading with the coming
Of dawn's soft, silver light,
Glad strains of song came sweetly
Upon the quiet air
Until it seemed the morning
Was singing everywhere.

The music rippled clearly
A hymn of happy praise,
And echoes answered fleetly
Far down the garden ways.
They knew not that their singing
Was gladdening my heart,
Or that their songs so cheery
Could cheerfulness impart.

But all the day will linger
The songs they sang to me,
Within my heart shall echo
The merry minstrelsy;
No way there is to tell them
My thanks in human words,
Nor know they how I love them,
My choristers, the birds!

Cradles in Adobe.

BY HARRIETTE WILBUR.

HAVE you happened to notice that the cliff swallow will not live anywhere and everywhere? There is a reason for the way these birds establish their crowded villages in some localities and are utterly unknown in others. King Duncan, approaching Macbeth's castle, noticed the house martins nesting on every corner and jutting buttress, and remarked:

"This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve
By his loved mansionry, that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here. . . .
Where they much breed and haunt, I have observed
The air is delicate."

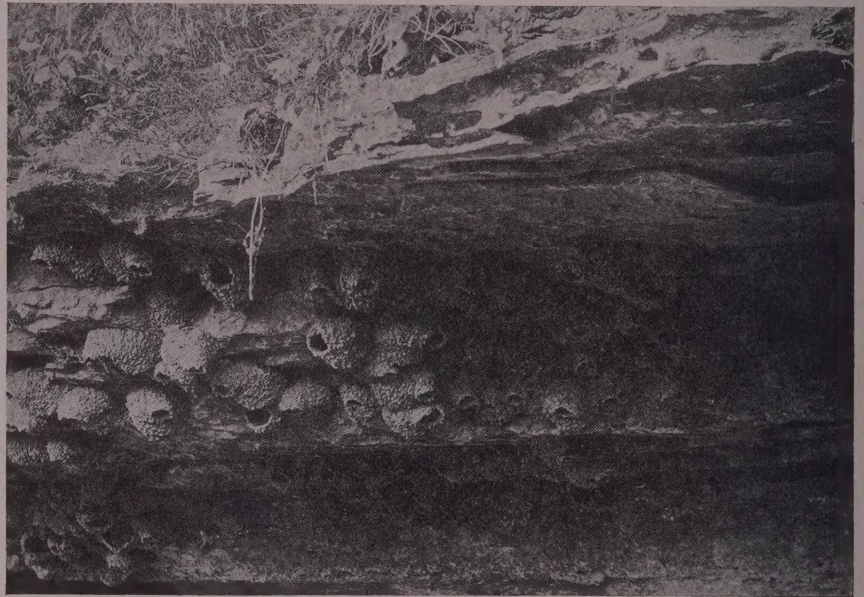
The American cliff swallow is just as particular in the matter of locality, though its choice is not based on the quality of the air to be found there, but on the quality of the soil. He is a mason, and one of the best in the business; as he makes all his bricks without straw, however, he is naturally very critical of what materials he does use. He knows that a sandy soil is useless to him, that a rich black loam is no better, that a sticky clay is just right. So when he finds a deposit of good adobe clay, he feels bound to use it.

I remember a steep river-bank that rivaled Macbeth's castle in the number of its swallow nests. Rows of them stretched from side to side across the cliff, tiers of them ranged up and down, like the windows of a skyscraper or immense apartment house. And the busy birds went back and forth, each guided by some unerring instinct to its own

nest in the crowded colony, just as city tenants do now.

I once watched a busy crowd of the birds at their work. They found their clay in a ravine not far away. Standing on the damp clay, the little mason would lift his wings high above his head, no doubt to keep them clean and out of the way. He would seem to be rooting in the clay with his beak, much as a pig grubs out goobers, and to be scratching with his feet like a hen. When he had a mouthful, he would roll it about on the ground with his beak. Saliva was doubtless mixed with the clay while working it thus; ornithologists say that such is the case.

"And the swallow, to help man invent,
Revealed the best way to economise clay,
And bricks to combine with cement."



By L. M. Thiers.

CLIFF SWALLOWS' NESTS.

When he had a round ball of clay, about the size of a "commie," he would fly up to the nest he was building or repairing on the cliff. After working there a moment, sticking the ball in place, back he would come for more clay. He used no straw or grass in the adobe, nor did I ever find a cliff swallow's nest that had it, though the barn swallow makes this material prominent in his building. The nests I examined had a peculiar warty appearance, showing the joining of the different balls of clay. One could almost count the number used in making a nest. The nests were uniformly bottle-shaped, larger at the bottom than at the top, with an opening in the side near the roof. From the circle left on the rock when a nest was broken off, I was convinced that the bird started with a layer laid around the wall and then worked outward to the doorway. One old nest that I examined had been neatly lined with feathers and grass. The most of them crumbled easily, if struck, though some were harder than others. This was doubtless due to the quality of the mud or the amount of saliva used.

The cliff swallow is also the eaves swallow, in America. He has recognized the value to him of man's peculiar way of shaping a building. He knows that sheltered eaves make much better and safer sites than ex-

posed cliffs. And so, whenever he finds it practicable, he fastens his adobe under some rafter. In such cases he does not always build the bottle-shaped nest that is so suitable to cliff edges, but adapts the shape of his nest to accommodate its location. Some are bowl-shaped, some pocket-shaped, and even saddled, if necessary.

A gentleman tells me that twenty years ago the eaves swallows almost took possession of his farm buildings, making themselves a nuisance all summer long. There was a small lake on the place, banked with a soft, sticky clay, and the eaves swallows seemed to go wild at the sight of it. A perfect mania for nest-building took possession of the birds every summer. Each exposed rafter and eave ledge on the farm had its corresponding adobe. From mid-May to September the birds chat-

tered and shrieked all day long about their domestic duties of building a home and rearing a family or two.

It was useless to try to drive the birds away. One could knock down all the nests he could reach, and by the time he had made the rounds they were all rebuilt. About ten years ago, however, the lake was drained and cultivated. The first year some of the old nests were used, but many were run-down and "to let." By the third summer the swallows had deserted the vicinity.

The Oriole's Cradle.

BY HELEN M. RICHARDSON.

THERE'S a little cradle that swings and swings.

There's a happy mother that sings and sings.
And all day long with the tenderest care
She feeds the young birds that are nestled there.

Over and over the song she sings,
While rocked by the south wind the cradle swings,

Till the sky grows dim as the shadows fall
Covering the singer and birdlings small.
For night is a mantle God's loving care
Provides for his creatures everywhere.

For the Quiet Hour.

Growing.

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I have become a man, I have put away childish things.

Bible.

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,

As the swift seasons roll!

Leave thy low-vaulted past!

Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,

Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

Prayer.

BY REV. ROBERT F. LEAVENS, FIRST PARISH,
FITCHBURG, MASS.

THOU Most High and Most Perfect One, bowing before thee we are made to know how small and weak we are, and with how many shortcomings. Yet also we remember that thou art high unto all who are lowly of heart and wilt lift up those who look up to thee in true humility. We thank thee for all that we have gained in stature and in strength, in wisdom and in virtue. But we would grow day by day and year by year larger in soul, if not in body, more strong, more wise, more kind, more pure. For we are thine own sons and daughters, and we know that thou, our Father, wouldst have us grow up to be more like thyself, even as did Jesus of Nazareth, thy son, grow up unto thee through boyhood and through manhood. Amen.

Kinship.

I AM so glad he loved the common things,
The drowsy chicks beneath their mother's wings.

Tall lilies nodding at the folks that pass,
The handiwork of God among the grass.

The sparrows and their brothers of the air,
Content to look to heaven for food and care.

He loved to stray by woods and singing rills,
Companion of the stars and solemn hills.

His friends he chose from men of low degree,
Tillers of land and toilers of the sea.

These things are written on the sacred page,
A star to simple folks from age to age.

And as the glowing words of love we scan,
We feel his kinship to the heart of man.

MARY DAVIS,
In The Congregationalist.

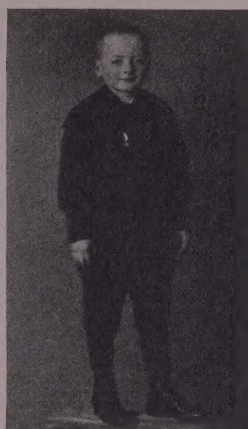
Hawk and Hens.

We hear of happy families of animals. A novel case of this kind is now told. A gentleman in Maryland has succeeded in taming a hawk, and in teaching it to live on the most amicable terms in a hennerly, enjoying the companionship of the hens and turkeys, and apparently not knowing that they ought to be enemies, not friends.

Exchange.

Letters from Holland, France, and England.

THE first letter tells the story of the little Belgian boy whose picture is here shown. Of the funds which were contributed by our Unitarian Sunday schools for the relief of children made destitute by the war,



\$100 was sent to Madame Wertheim-Bicker, of Amsterdam, who is doing a splendid work in caring for the Belgian children who have fled to Holland. She writes to Mr. Lawrance as follows:

My dear Sir,—You will remember the report I sent you about the use made of the money collected by American children for the benefit of Belgian

children. You will remember I told you that a dear little boy, August Lobnych was his name, had to be submitted to long treatment, his case being a most serious one which formerly was thought incurable. Science has made progress and fortunately in this case triumphed. The poor child has been in the hospital during ten months and you will understand how happy I was when I could bring him home the 22d of February, walking and jumping like all boys. When I took him to the hospital he was not able to move and had inflammation of the eyes.

We celebrated his seventh birthday on the 7th of February. He was then still in the hospital. When he got to my home he found a large cake with seven lights. While he was in the hospital the dear child never complained about his dull life. When I brought sweets, his first thought was to distribute them among the other children. Therefore I enjoyed greatly his great happiness in going with me, admiring all he saw, delighted about a drive. His grandfather and grandmother came to get him in my house. They live in the country and he will be well taken care of. His parents are abroad and I know it is better that in present circumstances he should be in Holland.

Please tell all this to the dear children who provided for this expense. I wish them to know they really helped to save this little boy. I am sending his portrait, which I hope will interest the children.

Bespeaking my thanks to your school children and to you for all the trouble taken,

Respectfully yours,

A. C. WERTHEIM-BICKER.

For the relief of Belgian children in France, \$191.70 was sent to Mrs. William G. Hill, an American lady who is a member of the Franco-American Committee, with headquarters in Paris. In a letter just received from Mrs. Hill, acknowledging a recent contribution made by the Unitarian church in Plainfield, N.J., she says:

It may interest you to know that our work is going forward with much success. Families who had thought to keep their children with them near the line of fire are constantly finding the strain beyond endurance. Each week brings us letters and telegrams from relief organizations along the front, requesting us to take in some homeless little people. The aggregate of last week's requests from such sources was somewhat over 100 cases. This is in addition to emergency cases which apply from Paris, from refugee families in the sorest distress, which we are receiving daily. During the past fortnight we have opened a new colony for boys which will accommodate 65, and a colony for 50 girls, both near Paris.

It is a pleasure to know that we have your interest

and that you desire to help us. Remember that six dollars pays the expenses of a child for a month.

Our little people are most appreciative of your generosity and sympathy.

With sincere appreciation of your interest,

Very truly yours,

CAROLINE R. HILL.

From London we have received a copy of a letter sent out by the British Unitarian Sunday School Association.

ESSEX HALL, ESSEX STREET, STRAND,
LONDON, W.C., March, 1916.

Belgian Hut Fund.

(To the Young People of our Congregations.)

Dear Friends,—Last year, the Sunday School Association asked you and all the young people of our Congregations to subscribe to present a Motor Ambulance to the Red Cross Society. This you did so generously that not only was the Ambulance presented, but enough money also to pay the running expenses for a period of nearly six months. That the Ambulance has done good work may be judged by the fact that within a particular period of three weeks it carried 400 wounded men from the Field Hospital to the Base.

This year we are asking you to provide a Hut for Belgian and other soldiers "Somewhere in France." Those of you who have brothers and friends at the Front or in Camp at home know how useful are the Y. M. C. A. huts, where the soldiers can go when off duty, to rest, write letters, read the papers, play games, and pass the time pleasantly. Many of our soldier friends have told us how glad they are to go to these huts when they have finished their day's work.

The Hut which we are asking you to give to the Belgian Hospital Fund is chiefly for the use of Belgian soldiers, who have put up such a splendid fight since the beginning of the war, and who are resting in one of the towns in the war zone. But other soldiers will be welcomed just as heartily, and it may be that some of our "old boys" may find their way to this Hut when they happen to be in this town.

After the war the Hut will be taken to Belgium, where it will be used as a Church and Parish Hall, until new buildings can be erected.

Will you help? We want every boy and girl in our Schools to give something towards this Hut, so that those who are working on the other side may know that we are still thinking of them and are anxious to do what we can to help.

We remain, faithfully yours,

ANNIE E. CLEPHAN, President.

W. BLAKE ODGERS, Junr., Hon. Treasurer.
T. M. CHALMERS, Hon. Secretary.

If any of our schools or any of our readers would like to renew their contributions to the work being done in Holland and France, or to contribute to the "Belgian Hut Fund," checks may be sent to Rev. William I. Lawrance, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., who will gladly forward whatever may thus be sent to him.

Rainy Weather.

BY HARRIETTE WILBUR.

THE robin sings out in the rain—

Cheery bel

Over and on till the sun shines again—

Cheery bel

The shower, he knows, has a most useful way
Of bringing such tidbits as worms to the day,
And so he shouts loudly as ever he may:

Cheery bel Cheery bel Cheery bel

But poor human folk mourn and wail—

Deary mel

When clouds hide their sun like a veil—

Deary mel

Though the trouble they bear is a friend in disguise,

And after 'tis past they will dry their eyes
And say it was best, now they harp in this wise:

Deary mel Deary mel Deary mel

Bluebird Neighbors.

BY H. W. PORTER.

A PAIR of bluebirds once nested in our clothespin-bag. When mother discovered it, the cradle was not finished, so she carefully lifted out the loose mass of sticks and put it in a near-by mountain-ash. The birds scolded her roundly, but she used her pins. In the afternoon she hung the bag back on the clothes-post, and forgot all about the birds. The next day she noticed them working about the bag again, and, peeping in, saw the almost completed nest. And this time she left the birds to nest in peace.

They were very tame. They didn't mind us as we hovered about, watching them. The day after the nest was lined, mainly with string, the first pale-blue egg was laid. During the next four days a new egg was added each morning. The birds spent most of their time in the trees about, but the morning of the fifth day Mother Bluebird came back after her feed and exercise, and brooded the eggs faithfully.

The mate was never far away, keeping silent guard in the mountain-ash or on top of the post, or chatting sociably or singing his tender little song. Sometimes her tiny blue-brown head peeped from the bag, but usually she kept behind closed curtains. Often we saw her being fed, as though she were a young bird. Several times each day he took her place on the nest, but he never hovered the eggs as closely as she. His head was always craning anxiously from the doorway, and when she returned he often seemed to be chiding her for staying too long. Manlike, he found it difficult to tend the cradle.

Just two weeks from the day Mother Bluebird commenced brooding, new, weak twitterings were heard in the bag. When we looked in, we found two birds fresh from the egg, and later in the day two more came out. The mother brooded them most of the day, but twice left the nest to carry away shells. The next morning the fifth egg was hatched.

At first the young were clad in dingy down; but soon the blue began to show in spots, and the gray to darken, until they were a marbled mixture. After about twelve days, three out of the five showed more blue than the other two, and we decided they were male birds. Even when the feathers were well out, the down showed in places, particularly over the eye, giving the birds a baby unkemptness as though just awakened from sleep.

Before all the nestlings were fully feathered, Mother Bluebird's wing became hurt in some way. We did all we could for her, and she let us bathe and salve it without ever trying to escape. But from that time flight was very awkward and slow for her. Then Father Bluebird took most of the care of the five babies, being constantly on the wing all day. We helped him with contributions of boiled egg moistened slightly, and so the nestlings grew as fat and dimpled as babies should be. Mother Bluebird looked after the sanitation of the nest, and everything was kept spotless in spite of her affliction.

One morning a birdling was on the edge of the doorway, taking stock of the great world. Mother Bluebird chirped anxiously from the post overhead, and he answered peevishly. Father Bluebird flew in with food, and after learning all about the matter, he flew to the mountain-ash and called. But Baby Bluebird lacked courage. All at once a little

mottled head peered up behind Brother Bluebird, and sister joined her cheeping encouragement. Either she said something that aroused his courage, or went so far as to push him, for suddenly Brother Bluebird teetered, squeaked with fright, spread his wings, and fluttered wildly to the lowest branch of the ash. As soon as he left the bag, Father Bluebird flew to meet him, and escorted him with loud applause.

Sister Bluebird took her brother's place on the door-sill, and with but little time spent in preparation, gave a chirp as much as to say, "Now watch me!" and sailed to a still higher branch.

By evening the parents had their whole brood in the ash. Three babies perched on a branch, crowded as closely to each other and to the trunk as they could get. The father slept on another limb with one child pressed between him and the tree, while lower down was Mother Bluebird and another nestling.

For days the family remained about the yard; then we missed them and thought they had left for the season. But in September the parent birds were back; we recognized them by the maimed wing of the female and the tender devotion of the male. Even when all the other birds had migrated, and the snow came, the pair did not leave. Mother Bluebird's wing was too crippled for the long journey, no doubt, and her faithful mate would not leave her. They had started their children off and were remaining for the winter. They housed themselves in the barn, and lived royally on our mountain-ash berries, crumbs, and suet.

Who's Who in Birdland.

BY ADELBERT F. CALDWELL.

MR. HAWK and Mr. Eagle
Platform builders are;
Bring they their material,
Both from near and far.

Wish to find a miner?
That's not very hard.
Mr. Bank Swallow is one,—
Just consult his card.

Mr. Woodpecker's well known,
Noisy as can be,—
Excellent work he does in wood,
A carpenter is he.

Of the guild of masons,
Building in the spring,
Is Mr. Robin Redbreast,—
To him nest orders bring.

Just the finest weaver—
He's "high"—a worthy goal
(Lord Baltimore's coat-of-arms he wears)—
Is Mr. Oriole.

Saving the Mocking-bird.

BY ELIZABETH RALSTON.

THE boys in the alley had called Harold a coward because he was afraid to fight, so he went home. He backed through his own gate and latched it carefully, then sat down in the woodshed door and watched Rastus, the big, black cat, who was on top of a post trying to catch a mocking-bird that was teasing him because he had killed its mate.

Harold wished the bird was as big as an eagle and could carry Rastus miles and

miles away and make him walk back. It would only be serving him right.

Once the bird swooped down almost to Rastus' black head, and he nearly overbalanced in his effort to catch it. After that he sat very still and pretended to sleep. Harold thought the bird knew that he was just pretending, but it did not, and came so near that Rastus tried to seize it. He struck it a hard blow with his paw, but did not catch it. It screamed, then fluttered away and fell to the ground.

Rastus jumped off the post and ran right toward it, but Harold yelled and clapped his hands till he frightened the big black cat and he scampered under the woodshed. Then Harold went to get the bird, but it was so frightened that it fluttered away and, not knowing where it was going, went right under the woodshed too.

Harold did not know what to do. He never had been under the woodshed and was afraid that, if he went, he never would get out again, for it was so low; but if he waited for some one to take a plank from the floor to let him through, the bird would be killed after all, so he dropped on all fours and followed.

Whew! How dark it was! At first he could not tell where to go, then it seemed to get lighter and he could see that Rastus had gone to the farthest corner and was watching him. How his yellow eyes glared! and how Harold wanted to creep out again, but the poor little bird must be saved!

"Scat! scat! you old scoundrel!" cried Harold, and Rastus tried to run past him. Harold gave him a rousing slap that sent him scampering, then he crept on to the fluttering bird, and with the little, quivering thing held carefully in one hand, he followed Rastus out to where the sun was shining.

If mother had not been a good bird doctor it would have died, but in a little while it was able to fly, and you may be sure it never tried to tease Rastus again.

It made its home in the vines that grew over the door and seemed to try to repay them for their trouble by singing to them.

Mother said she thought it was rejoicing with her because she was the mother of a very brave boy instead of being the mother of a common prize-fighter.

Up—not Down.

BY L. D. STEARNS.

NAY! Manhood Street winds *up*—not down!

Eyes to the front, my lad;
Shoulders square, and heart brave and true,
Facing whatever may come to you,
Or whatever the road, my lad.

Whether it's cloudy, or whether bright,
Whistle a bit, the day;
Whether it's morning, or whether night,
Marching along the way,
Throw up your head, throw wide your heart,
Hold out a hand on the road;
The minute you've helped a traveler,
You have gained a hundred-fold.

There are men, and then men, my laddie;
And some of them, I ween,
Are after the heart of their Maker,
And others I have seen,
Are—not quite up to the standard
It takes to fashion a man.
So, my lad, as you're toiling upward,
Reach a goal that gleams high, if you can!

PAGE FOR LITTLE READERS



BREAKFAST IS READY.

Just Like Me!

BY LOUISE M. HAYNES.

SOMETIMES at night when I'm in bed
I hear some sleepy birds,—
They sing a very drowsy song,
And I know plain as words
Just what those baby birdies say,
"Way up there in the trees:
"O father, will you bring to me
A drink of water, please?"

The Obliging Mrs. Bluebird.

BY MINNIE L. UPTON.

NOW, will you just look at that,
Bonnie?" spluttered Billy
Bluebird. "Micky Martin
and Molly Martin have moved into
our house—our house! Look!"

Bonnie Bluebird perched close beside her excited mate, and smoothed a few of her ruffled feathers. She was very tired, after their long flight from the South, and it certainly was provoking to find another family in their house, in which they had raised so many of their children. But she was a sweet-tempered little lady, and never quarreled with *any* one if she could help it. After smoothing her own feathers, she arranged a few for Billy before she replied. And her voice was very gentle and low.

"I see, Billy. It certainly appears very impolite of Mr. and Mrs. Martin. But you know their own home blew down last fall, just before time to go South. Perhaps, Billy, they've forgotten that was our house."

"Humph!" remarked Billy, eyeing Mr. and Mrs. Martin's activities very, very glumly.

"Now, Billy, let's not get cross or unhappy, this lovely morning. I feel quite nicely rested; so let's look about

a bit. Who knows what we may find?"

"Mmm—well," agreed Billy, who never could resist Mrs. Bluebird's sweet voice and coaxing ways.

So away they flew. The house where they had lived for several years was nailed to a high pole on the corner of the apple-house in the orchard of Mr. Brown.

"Let's go over and see if any of the Browns are about," proposed Mrs. Bluebird. "Probably Polly and Dick are much larger than last year—these humans do grow so fast! But I'm sure they are just as nice as ever."

"All right!" said Mr. Bluebird, quite cheerfully.

So they flew over to the house, and perched on the old Bartlett pear tree. No one was in sight; but suddenly Mrs. Bluebird gave a little gasp.

"Look! Look, Billy!" she cried.

Mr. Bluebird looked. And what do you suppose he saw? A fine new birdhouse, on a fine, high, strong pole, right where the Martins' house had been the year before!

"Well now, that's something like!" chuckled he.

"Spick-and-span, Billy—and so big! I shall have plenty of room to *put* things!"

"Won't the Martins be mad, Bonnie, when they see what they've missed by being so piggyish?"

"Oh, I hope not, Billy! I want everybody in this bright, beautiful world to be happy. Now let's get right to work! See, here is some fuzzy stuff on the lilac bush that I'm sure Polly put there."

So they set to work, and were hard at it when Polly and Dick came home from somewhere.

"Oh, look, Dick!" cried Polly. "The Bluebirds have taken your new

house, instead of the Martins! Goody! They're so lovely!"

"Well, Sis, I'm glad I finished it yesterday, instead of going off with the boys. Never thought they'd come so early, either. Saw this morning that the Martins have taken their old house; so if this hadn't been ready they'd have gone somewhere else, and we'd have lost 'em."

"And now we can watch them all summer, Dick! Oh, but I'm glad you finished it in time!"

And Billy Bluebird and Bonnie Bluebird, resting a moment on the topmost twig of the old Bartlett pear tree, caroled something that sounded like "Glad, glad, so glad, so glad!"

I Wonder Why!

BY ADELBERT F. CALDWELL.

WHEN Willie shirks his morning tasks,
No matter if the sky is blue,
The very rooms seem still and sad,
And everything the whole day through;
And Willie walks 'round sober, too,—
I wonder why!

When Willie does the best he can,
No matter if the sky is gray,
The squirrels, birds, rooms, flowers, and
trees

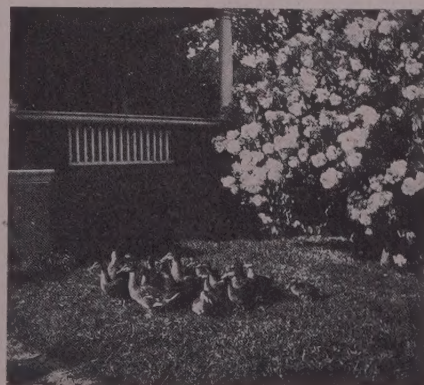
Seem to rejoice throughout the day;
And Willie is both glad and gay,—
I wonder why!

White Naughtiness.

A LITTLE white lie came tiptoeing by,
Whispering, "Almost true!"
But it spoiled, so they say,
A little boy's day;
And his honor was stained by it, too—
Oh, yes!

Such harm can a white lie do.

PAULINE FRANCES CAMP,
in The Continent.



LOOKING FOR A FRIEND.



THE BEACON CLUB

OUR PURPOSE: Helpfulness.

OUR MOTTO: Let your light shine.

OUR BADGE: The Beacon Club Button.



Writing a letter for this corner makes you a member of the Beacon Club. Address, The Beacon Club, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

THE first letter which we publish to-day contains an interesting suggestion for Sunday school officers and teachers who are sometimes puzzled to know how to reward pupils who have been constant in attendance during the school year.

ROCHESTER, N.Y.,
21 Vick Park B.

Dear Miss Buck,—I have read *The Beacon* for many years, and as I have enjoyed it very much, I thought I would write and tell you so.

I go to the Unitarian Sunday school of this city. Every year, the children who have not missed a Sunday from October to June, have a book placed in the library in their name. This makes them a member of the "Order of the Wild Olive." The idea was taken from the stories of the ancient Greek champions, who, after being crowned with a wild olive wreath, went to a temple, took off the crown, and laid it on the altar so that the other people might see it. I am a member of this order.

I would like to become a member of the Beacon Club.

Your friend,

KATHERINE KEIPER.
(Age 12 years.)

WINNIPEG, CANADA,
97 Evanson Street.

Dear Miss Buck,—I enjoy going to Sunday school. My daddy's name is Rev. Dr. Westwood. He tells us stories in Sunday school. Our Sunday school teacher's name is Miss Pitt. I enjoy hearing her lesson.

This is the verse she gave us to learn this Sunday: "In my Father's house are many mansions."

I enjoy reading *The Beacon*. I am eight years old and in grade four.

Yours truly,
LUCY WESTWOOD.

PORTSMOUTH, VA.,
1034 Ann Street, Park View.

Dear Editor,—I go to the Unitarian Sunday school of Norfolk as there is not one in Portsmouth. I have two brothers, Harold, who is nine years old, and Jack, who is seven. I also have a sister whose name is Marjorie. She is only five, but she goes to Sunday school and is in the first class. My teacher is Mr. W. R. James and our superintendent is Mr. Arthur Gray. There are only six pupils in our class, three boys and three girls. Mr. Gray, our superintendent, is trying to get up a baseball nine, but we have not yet got enough scholars, but we hope soon to have enough large boys for a team.

I read *The Beacon* every Sunday and think it is a very nice paper.

From your friend,

NORMAN QUAYLE.

BELMONT, MASS.,
21 Clover Street.

Dear Miss Buck,—I go to the Belmont Unitarian Sunday school. My teacher's name is Mrs. Sherman, and Rev. Charles T. Billings is our minister.

I belong to a club called the Junior Lend-a-Hand. I am twelve years old and would like very much to belong to the Beacon Club. I read *The Beacon* and like it very much.

Your friend,

DORIS STONE.

Doris's sister Rosamond also writes a letter to the Club and sends an enigma which will soon be published.

DAVENPORT, IA.,
124 West 13th Street.

Dear Miss Buck,—To attend the Unitarian Sunday school of Davenport, Ia., regularly is a real pleasure.

Our Sunday school is getting money for the church, by bringing old newspapers and magazines to Sunday school. Then when we get enough we sell them.

I would like to be a member of the Beacon Club

Your ten-year-old friend,

LOUISE GRILK.

NORWELL, MASS.

Dear Miss Buck,—I am twelve years old and live in a small town about twenty miles from Boston. I go to the Unitarian church and Sunday school. Our minister is Mr. Houghton and my teacher in Sunday school is Mrs. Bates. The superintendent is eighty-nine years old and this is his sixtieth year as superintendent of the school.

I enjoy the stories in the *Beacon* very much. May I belong to the Beacon Club?

Very sincerely,

HELEN L. FOGG.

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA,
862 Warsaw Avenue.

Dear Miss Buck,—I have been going to write to *The Beacon* Club for a long time, as I would like to become one of its members. But it was not until last Sunday, when our Sunday school teacher (Miss Farrar) asked how many had joined the Club that I really decided to. I am fourteen years old and I am in a class of eleven girls.

Your friend,

JULIA A. CROFTON.

NEW YORK CITY,
306 West 72d Street.

Dear Miss Buck,—I go to All Souls' Church. Mr. Sullivan is our minister. In Sunday school I am in my Mother's class. We have a little table around which we sit. We are studying a book called "Living Together." We sometimes draw and color pictures. I would like to belong to the Beacon Club.

Love from

CAROLINE W. FRASER.

MARBLEHEAD, MASS.,
52 Prospect Street.

Dear Miss Buck,—I go to the Unitarian church every Sunday, and look forward with impatience to the time when *The Beacons* are distributed. I am twelve years old. My teacher is Mr. Green.

Yours truly,

WILLIAM H. REYNOLDS.

Other new members of our Club are: Robert Keaton, San José, Cal.; Margaret Morgan, Westmount, Montreal, Can.; Evelyn Taylor, Waterbury, Conn.; Alice, Carl, and Paul Holinger, Chicago, Ill.; Dorothy A. Jordan, Helen E. Morey, Marguerite M. Nickerson, Mertie L. Webster, and Marion Wescott, Castine, Me.; Ardia Hodgins, Houlton, Me. (who sends an enigma); Kathryn De Ruyter, Raymond, Minn.; Louise Harriman, Laconia, N.H. (who sends an enigma); Nelson Paterson and Chester F. Scott, Elizabeth, N.J.; Harry Hall, Jamestown, N.Y.; Mary S. Lighthall, Syracuse, N.Y.; Julia Mary Jones, Dayton, Ohio; Elizabeth Anderson and Jane Dewey, Toledo, Ohio (who send enigmas); Mary Urban, Lancaster, Pa.; Mary Peters, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Joseph Felton, Providence, R.I.; David S. Loudon and Leighton A. Saunders, Burlington, Vt.

RECREATION CORNER.

ENIGMA LXX.

I am composed of 16 letters.
My 4, 2, 3, 4, is a part of speech.
My 8, 6, 9, 9, 10, is a color.
My 6, 7, 9, is a grain.
My 1, 9, 12, 12, 15, 6, is a part of a house.
My 14, 2, 3, 16, 11, is a hill.
My 5, 13, 16, is a number.
My whole is a magazine.

PAUL HOLINGER.

ENIGMA LXXI.

I am composed of 34 letters.
My 16, 2, 26, 3, 31, 29, 15, 9, is one way to travel.
My 34, 19, 25, 13, is something we hear.
My 32, 24, 21, 10, 12, is a part of a house.
My 14, 22, 8, 23, 33, 25, 21, is worked.
My 4, 28, 6, 7, 8, 3, is a drove of fishes.
My 5, 18, 17, 20, 22, is a kind of duck.
My 1, 30, 27, 11, is to whine.
My whole is a saying by Lowell.

N. L. R.

DROPPED-WORD ACROSTIC.

Fill the blanks in the following sentences with words of four letters, and see what the first letters of the words will spell.

1. The sailors — the boat.
2. The robbers — the safe.
3. The farmer — his cows.
4. The teacher — a story.
5. He jumped — the fence.
6. She lives — the church.

CAROL MASON.

CROSS-WORD ENIGMA.

My first is in tall and also in short.
My second is in think and also in thought.
My third is in me and also in thee.
My fourth is in buzz and also in bee.
My fifth is in eat and also in ate.
My sixth is in calendar and also in date.
My seventh is in can't and also in can.
My eighth is in woman and also in man.
My ninth is in pain and also in Cain.
My whole is a paper's name.

MILDRED H. LANMAN.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN NO. 30.

ENIGMA LXVI.—Behold the lovely springtime.

ENIGMA LXVII.—Encyclopedia.

TWISTED FLOWERS.—1. Buttercup. 2. Daisy.

3. Geranium. 4. Rose. 5. Tulip. 6. Hyacinth.

7. Aster. 8. Nasturtium. 9. Cosmos. 10. Arbutus.

BEHEADINGS.—1. Bear, ear. 2. Glove, love. 3.

Trice, rice. 4. Leaves, eaves. 5. Seat, eat.

WORD SQUARE.—F R O G
R U S E
O S S A
G E A R

Answers to puzzles have been sent by Leslie Booth, Montreal, Can.; Caroline Marr, Fall River, Mass.; Lucile Barrett, Nantucket, Mass.; and Reginald Hanson, Quincy, Mass.

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